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Paper / Poster title: Which sport for whom? A cluster-analytical approach for the development of individually matched exercise programs

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Abstract (maximum 250 words, Times New Roman 12 pts, single-spaced)

Current reviews concerning the psychological benefits of physical exercise often conclude that the low to moderate effects can't be generalized. There is little knowledge about the causal mechanisms and additionally a lot of moderators have to be considered. Further research has to address the question, for which person could which kind of exercise lead to which psychological effects under which circumstances. Answers to this question can partly illuminate the affect-adherence-link, which is assumed to be of particular relevance for the maintenance of physical exercise.

Our study approach faces this question by analyzing the effects of individually matched exercise programs on psychological well-being and exercise adherence in a quasi-experimental design. We argue that an individually matched exercise program has to fit the individual needs and expectations to attain improvements of psychological well-being in the long run. If the exercise program succeeds in this regard, exercise adherence will be promoted as well.

The study design started with a matching process, which at first included a comprehensive assessment of n = 231 middle-aged adults. During a 90-minutes test session the participants were interviewed about their past and current physical exercises and sport activities. Furthermore, we used a computer-assisted assessment of various motives for leisure sports and we tested the participants' motor abilities. In a next step we conducted a cluster-analytic classification of the target group with respect to their motives for leisure sports. After that we developed target-group specific exercise programs and invited the participants to take part in two 13-week-intervention periods. The effectiveness of these individually matched programs was analyzed based on changes of

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psychological well-being and program attendance from the beginning to the end of the intervention periods. By comparison with a control group causal mechanisms were also examined.

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